

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SECDEF FOR ISA/DSAA; USCINCEUR FOR ECJ4/7-SA; AMEMBS FOR ODC'S

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MASS, NO
SUBJ: PROPOSAL TO REDUCE APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE F-16

1. NORNING EDITION OF OSLO NEWSPAPER AFTENPOSTEN CARRIED
ARTICLE ON F-16 UNDER HEADLINE "PROPOSAL TO REDUCE APPROPRIATIONS
FOR THE F-16" . ARTICLE IS QUOTED AS FOLLOWS: "THE HOUSE DEFENSE
COMITTEE IN ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROCUREMENT OF MILITARY
EQUIPMENT IN 1978 HAS PROPOSED A 165 MILL DOLLAR CUT IN THE
F16 APPROPRIATIONS. THE FORD ADMINISTRATION PROPOSED 1960
MILL DOLLARS FOR THE F-16 PROGRAM, AND THIS IS ONE OF THE FEW
ITEMS ON THE PROCUREMENT LIST THAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION
HAS NOT TOUCHED. AT THE SAME TIME, THE U.S. AIR FORCE HAS
REJECTED THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL'S (GAO) CRITICISM THAT
THE F-16'S FUEL SYSTEM, STEERING MECHANISM AND HYDRAULIC
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SYSTEMS ARE VERY VULNERABLE.

THE TOTAL AMOUNT RECOMMENDED FOR MILITARY EQUIPMENT
PROCUREMENT IS 35.7 BILL DOLLARS. THIS IS 16 MILL.
DOLLARS MORE THAN WHAT THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION ASKED
FOR, BUT 2.6 BILL DOLLARS BELOW THE FORD ADMINISTRATION'S
PROPOSAL. IN GENERAL, THE HOUSE DEFENSE COMMITTEE CALLED

FOR CUTS IN APPROPRIATIONS FOR R&D BUT INCREASES FOR PRODUCTION. IN THE CASE OF THE F-16, THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED CUTS BOTH FOR R&D AND FOR PRODUCTION.

THE COMMITTEE PROPOSED A 103 MILL DOLLAR CUT IN R&D FOR THE F-16 BECAUSE OF UNFOUNDED (UNNECESSARY) COST INCREASES, AND BECAUSE THE PROJECT NOW INCLUDES UNNECESSARY ELEMENTS, SUCH AS A NEW SIMULATOR THAT CAN SIMULATE AN ENTIRE MISSION. IN ADDITION, A 62 MILL DOLLAR CUT IS PROPOSED FOR PRODUCTION OF THE F-16.

'SUCH UNFOUNDED COST INCREASES ARE UNKNOWN TO US,' SAYS THE HEAD OF THE MATERIELKONTORET (MATERIEL OFFICE) IN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY, COL HELGE OMRENG. NORWAY HAS ORDERED A REGULAR SIMULATOR FOR THE F-16, OF THE SAME TYPE THAT IS USED IN MOST ADVANCE PLANES. IT WILL ENABLE US TO SAVE ON FUEL AND HOURS OF FLYING FOR THE PILOTS IN TRAINING. WE HAVE CONSIDERED BUYING A SIMULATOR WITH ANOTHER COUNTRY, BUT SINCE WE WOULD NEED IT FOR ABOUT 2500 HOURS A YEAR, WE HAVE COME TO THE CONCLUSION WE NEED OUR OWN. THE TYPE OF SIMULATOR NOW BEING DEVELOPED IN THE U.S. IS A HIGHLY ADVANCED ONE WHICH CAN SIMULATE ALL MOVEMENTS OF THE PLANE. THAT IS NOT THE ONE WE HAVE ORDERED, BUT THE ONE WE ARE INTERESTED IN CAN BE REBUILT SO THAT IT ACTUALLY HAS THE SAME QUALITIES, OMRENG SAYS.

'AS FOR THE CHARGES THAT THE F-16 IS A VULNERABLE PLANE, I WOULD LIKE TO NOTE THAT THIS IS A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WHERE WE CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE TWO UNCLASSIFIED

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PROTOTYPES,' COL. OMRENG SAYS. BOTH THE FUEL SYSTEM, STEERING MECHANISMS AND THE HYDRAULIC SYSTEM HAVE ALREADY BEEN FURTHER DEVELOPED TO THE POINT WHERE WE NO LONGER CONSIDER THEM RISKS AT ALL. FOR ONE THING, THE PLANE NOW HAS BOTH AN AUXILIARY FUEL CONTROL AND PUMP. AS WILL BE KNOWN FROM THE AGREEMENTS, NORWAY IS FULLY INVOLVED IN THIS DEVELOPMENT WORK. THE MATTERS THAT WERE CRITICIZED WERE MERELY STEPS ON THE ROAD TO THE BEST POSSIBLE RESULTS. ONE CANNOT ALWAYS EXPECT TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM RESULTS THE FIRST TIME AROUND, SAYS COL HELGE OMRENG.

ALSO THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL HAS STATED THAT THE CRITICISM OF THE F-16 PROGRAM HAS BEEN COMPLETELY MISINTERPRETED. THERE ARE NO FAULTS WITH THE F-16 THAT HAVE NOT BEEN STRAIGHTENED UP OR WHICH CANNOT BE CHANGED IN THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLANE, THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL SAID."

2. COMMENT: IN LIGHT OF CONSIDERABLE PRESS ATTENTION GIVEN F-16
HERE, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ASAP ANY INFORMATION WASHINGTON CAN
PROVIDE REGARDING HOUSE DEFENSE COMMITTEE ACTIONS, REASON FOR CUTS,
AND IMPACT THEREOF SO THAT WE CAN BETTER RESPOND TO ANY OFFICIAL AND
PRESS INQUIRIES.
ANDERS

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